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Ignoring Poland, Again

A private letter to President Reagan from a leading Polish-American organization sharply criticizing administration policy toward Poland has gone unanswered. That has raised fears among Republican politicians that the 10-million-strong Polish community could react against Republican candidates in the November elections.

The Polish-American Congress demands a response to this question: Why has the Reagan administration kept the Polish defector, Col. Wladyslaw Kuklinski, under wraps in the face of charges by Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Polish strongman, that he tipped off the United States to details of the December 1981 martial law before defecting?

The organization's letter reflects rising anger within this country's politically potent Polish community over the administration's passive policy toward Poland. It shows that Jaruzelski's anti-American crusade, in stark contrast to his new love affair with Soviet ruler Mikhail Gorbachev, has drawn blood here. Written by Polish-American Congress president Aloysius Mazewski, the letter was strongly encouraged by leading Polish-American politicians.

Actually, the June 10 letter was aimed less at the president than at Secretary of State George Shultz. It ridiculed Jaruzelski's claim that Kuklinski's November 1981 warning of impending martial law was kept secret here because the United States wanted to provoke civil war when the crackdown came (it came six months later). But it also criticized the bland way in which the State Department rejected the Polish dictator's accusations.

Instead of blandness, the Polish Americans want truth and clarity. Why has Col. Kuklinski, now living with his family in the United States under heavy protection, not been allowed to face the news media and tell his story about events leading up to the fateful imposition of martial law? Why did the administration fail to warn leaders of the now outlawed Solidarity movement? Why were U.S. allies in Europe not told full details about Soviet connivance so they could take "direct retaliatory measures" against Moscow, instead of against Poland?

Kuklinski was Jaruzelski's principal go-between with Soviet Marshal Victor Kulikov, who as Warsaw Pact commander at the time was calling all the shots in preparing for martial law. Kuklinski knew everything there was to know. He was so sickened by Jaruzelski's prostration before Kulikov that he risked his life to warn the United States.

Critics charge that the administration's pas-

sive policy toward Poland stems not from any careful policy formulation about the only Eastern European Soviet satellite that contains a true underground revolutionary movement. Rather, they see Shultz's policy imperative today and in the months ahead as targeted strictly on the U.S.-Soviet relationship, fed by his hope for a breakthrough in arms control.

In short, the Shultz-led administration is ignoring Poland and Solidarity as irrelevant when weighed against a post-election U.S.-Soviet summit here. That is what so angers the Polish American community.

If Kuklinski were permitted by the administration to tell the full story of how Moscow manipulated the brutal destruction of Solidarity from outside—avoiding the visible stigma of direct intervention—the political impact could well affect U.S.-Soviet relations. It could also trigger an irate response from voters.

The Polish-American Congress has had particularly cordial relations with the Reagan White House until recently. In the few times that it has raised private questions with the president, satisfactory answers have been quickly received.

But trouble was brewing even before the Jaruzelski regime made its sensational charges last month that the United States had deliberately covered up Kuklinski's information about martial law. Repeated provocations by Jaruzelski, seemingly designed to provoke the United States or make it appear weak, have gone unanswered by the Reagan administration. They include deliberate signals by Warsaw that Solidarity founder Lech Walesa may himself be put in jail soon.

These grievances came to a boil in Philadelphia last week at a routine meeting of leaders of the ethnic organization. They adopted a resolution charging that the absence of administration policy at a time when Jaruzelski is moving toward final obliteration of Solidarity plays directly into his hands. Among other proposals, the resolution asks Reagan to exempt Radio Free Europe from Gramm-Rudman-Hollings spending ceilings.

But viewed as far more important is the surfacing of the Polish colonel who risked his life to tell the United States how tight the linkage really was between Warsaw and Moscow in the days leading up to martial law. The impact of frank talk from him in a public forum might introduce a new realism that seems sadly lacking as George Shultz rushes headlong toward another Soviet summit.

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